



U. S. Department of Justice

*George E. B. Holding*

*United States Attorney*

*Eastern District of North Carolina*

---

**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**THURSDAY - November 8, 2007**

**FEDERAL INDICTMENT CHARGES TWO FAYETTEVILLE MEN WITH  
CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT ROBBERY**

**RALEIGH** - United States Attorney George E. B. Holding announced that a federal grand jury sitting in Raleigh has charged **ROBERT HAMPTON TAYLOR**, 52, and **STEVEN CRAIG BETHEA**, 39, both of Fayetteville, North Carolina in a three-count Indictment with conspiracy and attempt to commit robbery of a business engaged in interstate commerce, Title 18, U.S.C., Section 1951; use of a firearm in a federal crime of violence, Title 18, U.S.C. Section 924(c); and felon in possession of a firearm in violation of Title 18, U.S.C., Section 922(g). The government alleges that **BETHEA** is an Armed Career Criminal and if convicted faces not less than 15 years imprisonment and up to life imprisonment.

According to the Indictment, beginning in or about March 15, 2007, and continuing to on or about March 26, 2007, **TAYLOR** and **BETHEA** conspired to rob Kato Bingo Hall located on Yadkin Road in Fayetteville, North Carolina at gunpoint. On March 27, 2007, **BETHEA** and **TAYLOR** traveled to Kato Bingo Hall with firearms,

binoculars, and gloves. On that same date, Officer Douglas Austin, while on duty with the Fayetteville Police Department, conducted a routine traffic stop in the area of Jack's Ford Road to check a suspicious vehicle with two occupants. Those occupants were **TAYLOR** and **BETHEA**. During the stop, **TAYLOR** shot Officer Austin in the chest and then proceeded to beat him. A Fort Bragg soldier came to Officer Austin's aid by jumping on **TAYLOR**. Officer Austin received 22 staples in his head. **BETHEA** ran from the car and was arrested later.

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

Investigation of the case was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and the Fayetteville Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Jane Jackson is prosecution for the government.

# # #

News releases are available on the U. S. Attorney's web page at [www.usdoj.gov/usao/nce](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nce) within 48 hours of release.